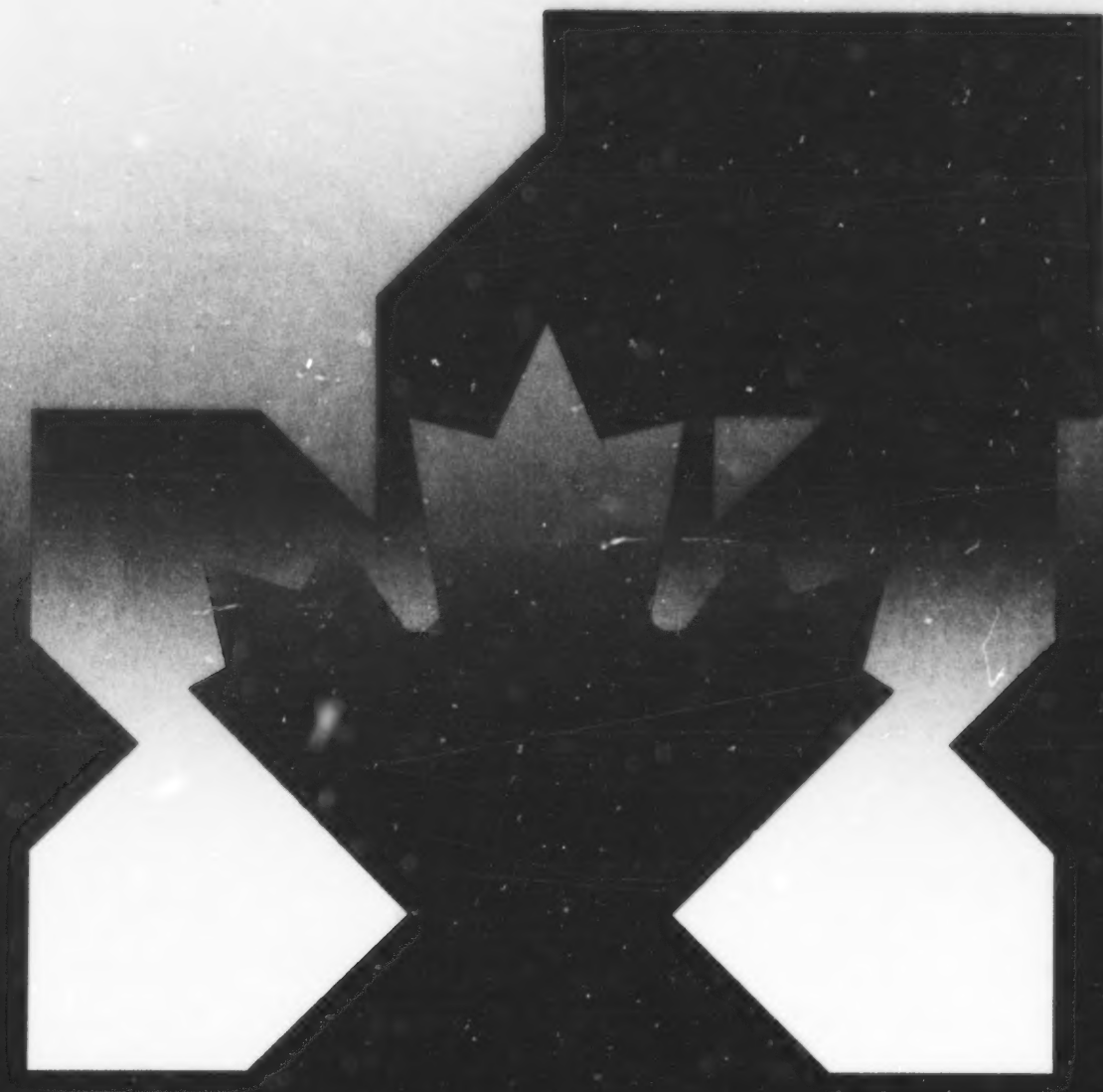


Canada Mortgage
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**A SYNTHESIS OF INTERNATIONAL
LITERATURE ON URBAN SAFETY
AND CRIME PREVENTION IN
RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS**

**INTERIM REPORT
AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Prepared by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
For the European and North American Conference
On Urban Safety and Crime Prevention. October, 1989

A SYNTHESIS OF INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON
URBAN SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION IN RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

INTERIM REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In preparation for the first European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention being held in Montreal October 10-13th, 1989 CMHC together with the Ontario Ministry of Housing commissioned a synthesis of the existing research on the relationship between residential environments and urban safety.

This interim report outlines the terms of reference of the study together with a summary of interim findings. The final report will not be complete until the end of the year. The synthesis is being undertaken by Prairie Research Associates Ltd in conjunction with Rick Linden at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to conduct a qualitative review of literature and experience and to synthesize findings dealing with crime prevention and urban safety in residential environments. The study will assess:

1. The documented relationship between residential environments and the incidence of crime to determine the extent to which housing and residential environments have contributed either positively or negatively to the incidence of crime and/or fear of crime; and
2. The strategies tested to address crime related problems in existing residential neighbourhoods.



SUMMARY OF INTERIM FINDINGS

The project is expected to be completed by Dec 31, 1989. The summary below is drawn from an interim, preliminary report prepared by the contractor.

In order to organize the review and synthesis the contractor has adopted a typology of crime prevention approaches with a concentration on victim/environment oriented and community based approaches to crime prevention to urban safety. This typology is presented below, followed by a brief discussion of each cell and some preliminary findings related to each.

Figure 1 - Typology of Community Based,
Opportunity Oriented Crime Prevention

Level of Application		
Strategies	Individual	Community
Physical	Direct and Indirect Target Hardening (Locks, Alarms etc)	Environmental Design, Lighting, Revitalization, Layout
Behavioural	Avoidance Victim Training	Neighbourhood Watch Citizen Patrol

1. Individual Strategies:

A. Physical Strategies

These strategies are generally implemented by the individual household to reduce vulnerability to victimization. Target hardening is the primary tool within this strategy, another strategy is property marking. These strategies assume that intruders will be deterred and studies have confirmed this premise.

While protecting individual homes against opportunistic crimes this strategy can tend to deflect crime to another victim, unless the strategy is adopted on a community basis. It has also been observed that the cost of adopting this strategy is a disincentive to lower income households, amongst whom vulnerability to victimization is often higher.

B. Behavioral Strategies

These strategies involve changes in the behavior of victims or potential victims in reaction to crime, or fear of crime. One type of behaviour in this category is avoidance. This would involve, for example, not walking alone after dark or avoiding dark lanes; or in the extreme not leaving ones home after dark. While achieving the objective of avoidance such strategies can however have a negative impact on the quality of life (i.e. through increased fear and isolation). Moreover it has been observed that protective actions may reduce risk for the individual but do not address the larger problem of fear which may continue to pervade the neighbourhood. Hence collective actions can be much more effective.

2. Community Strategies

A. Collective Social Strategies

Here social strategies include programs which encourage residents to watch over their neighbourhood and report suspicious activities. Public education and awareness campaigns are launched to stimulate a sense of citizen concern for the community. These strategies involve more than simply an aggregation of individual behavioral strategies (such as avoidance); they are comprehensive and involve a number of individuals working together.

B. Collective Physical Strategies

Physical strategies include the use of physical design changes to modify the environment such that criminal opportunity is restricted and social control is enhanced. Perhaps the best known strategy within this category is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). This is not however a solely physical strategy but rather overlaps between physical and social approaches since physical changes are a stimulus for behavioral change (both among victims and potential offenders).

The review and synthesis will examine the literature relating to each of the strategies outlined in the typology. The initial review has already enumerated a number of studies which have evaluated the effectiveness of various strategies although it would be premature at this point to draw any conclusions until the synthesis has been complete. The case studies described below do however serve to illustrate how various collective approaches have been implemented.

Case Study 1: The Shield of Confidence Program

The review of literature identified an example of how target hardening is being applied in a number of Canadian cities. Target hardening has been adopted within a program named The Shield of Confidence Program. Originally developed by the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional police, in co-operation with the local home builders association, the real estate

board and CMHC, the program involves the adoption of a voluntary building standard (for new homes) incorporating a number of crime prevention design features. Home builders voluntarily participate in the program. If the standards are met the police will certify the house providing a sticker confirming participation. While the program has not been subjected to a formal evaluation and is only applicable in new homes, the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police have informally indicated that the rates of break and enter in these Shield Of Confidence Houses have been very low.

Case Study 2: The Seattle Community Crime Prevention Program

Following a survey of residents which revealed that more citizens were concerned about burglary than any other offense, the Community Crime Prevention Program was initiated with the assistance of federal funding. The program involved four components:

- residential security inspection services;
- property marking and display of a warning decal;
- organization of block watch groups;
- education activities to inform citizens about prevention.

The above component activities were carried out by a staff of 10 full time civilians. A crime analysis was used to determine which areas most needed to be targeted. Several interim evaluations were carried out, one revealing a decline in motivation to participate after a few months. To remedy this dropout a 'maintenance component' involving follow up to reinforce original contact with block captains at regular intervals was developed.

This collective and persistent effort together with careful planning and detailed evaluation resulted in successfully meeting the primary goal of reducing the rate of burglary (after one year by 61% in participating residences). Ancillary benefits were increased reporting of burglaries and improved program services at various stages.

Case Study 3: The Oasis Technique (Fort Lauderdale, Florida)

This technique was applied in an area of Fort Lauderdale which had the poorest housing, highest crime rate, highest unemployment and lowest income. The program was a joint effort involving the residents, the Housing Authority and the police force aimed at revitalizing this sector of the city.

While both the Housing authority and the police had been independently devoting resources to improve physical conditions and arrest criminals these efforts had been ineffective. The oasis technique involved the police and housing officials working as a team in locations in which crime and housing problems were clearly related and where there was a core of 'good' citizens to support the program. While police and the Housing Authority co-ordinated and focused their efforts in crime enforcement and physical improvement, regular meetings were held involving community residents, police, housing authority, City Department of Community Affairs, the local business association, code enforcement personnel, landlords and

property owners. These meetings were intended to both identify problems and to suggest solutions.

It has been found that relationships between the police and the community are improved as the police have positive contacts with citizens in the community, and as the citizens realise that the the police are strong allies in the process of building a better community. Analysis of police calls for service showed that crime rates in the oasis areas had declined and were substantially lower than other lower income areas of the city.

It was the collective effort and involvement of the residents which overcame the earlier ineffective attempts to address the neighbourhood problems. The tactics used were very broad and not limited to the traditional justice based methods for dealing with crime. By attacking the problem in several different ways small areas were revitalized.

FINAL REPORT

As noted above the review and synthesis is scheduled for completion by the end of 1989. The Final report will expand upon the various strategies or approaches briefly outlined in the typology above and examine the factors which have contributed to the relative level of success of different strategies. Through a synthesis of these findings the study will attempt to identify how different strategies have worked in different contexts.

The study will assist Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation by raising its level of awareness and understanding about crime prevention and safety in residential environments and thereby ensuring that housing plays a role in promoting safer and better places to live.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CRIME PREVENTION
AND URBAN SAFETY IN RESIDENTIAL
ENVIRONMENTS**

**BIBLIOGRAPHIE SUR LA PRÉVENTION
DU CRIME ET LA SÉCURITÉ DANS
LES MILIEUX RÉSIDENTIELS
URBAINS**

Prepared at:

Canadian Housing Information Centre
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Ground Floor, Annex Building
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Préparé au :

Centre canadien de documentation
sur l'habitation
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October/octobre 1989



A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CRIME PREVENTION AND URBAN SAFETY IN RESIDENTIAL
ENVIRONMENTS / UNE BIBLIOGRAPHIE SUR LA PRÉVENTION DU CRIME
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